

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A music distribution method comparing:  
requesting a server to distribute music  
information from a music reproduction apparatus through  
5 a communication medium;

generating by said server a distribution file in  
which said music information requested and information  
concerning settings and conditions required for  
transmitting information from said music reproduction  
10 apparatus to said server are integrated;

distributing by said server said distribution file  
to said music reproduction apparatus through said  
communication medium; and

receiving by said server through said  
15 communication medium a number of times of reproduction  
of said music information reproduced by said music  
reproduction apparatus.

2. The music distribution method according to  
claim 1, further comprising requesting by said server  
20 to said music reproduction apparatus through said  
communication medium payment of a music-listening fee  
in accordance with said number of times of reproduction  
of said music information.

3. The music distribution method according to  
25 claim 1, wherein said communication medium is the  
Internet.

4. The music distribution method according to

claim 3, wherein said information concerning said settings and conditions includes an Internet IP address required for reporting said number of times of reproduction of said music information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server.

5           5. The music reproduction method according to claim 1, wherein said server receives said number of times of reproduction of said music information at a given frequency.

10           6. A music distribution method comprising:  
            requesting by a music reproduction apparatus to a server distribution of music information through a communication medium;

            receiving by said music reproduction apparatus  
15           from said server through said communication medium a distribution file in which said music information requested and information concerning settings and conditions required for transmitting information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server are  
20           integrated;

            reproducing by said music reproduction apparatus said music information in said distribution file;

            recording by said music reproduction apparatus a number of times of reproduction of said music  
25           information reproduced; and

            transmitting by said music reproduction apparatus said number of times of reproduction of said music

information to said server through said communication medium.

7. The music distribution method according to claim 6, further comprising receiving by said music reproduction apparatus a music-listening fee payment request according to said number of times of reproduction of said music information, which is transmitted from said server through said communication medium.

8. The music distribution method according to claim 6, wherein said communication medium is the Internet.

9. The music distribution method according to claim 8, wherein said information concerning settings and conditions includes an Internet IP address required for reporting said number of times of reproduction of said music information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server.

10. The music distribution method according to claim 6, wherein said music reproduction apparatus transmits said number of times of reproduction of said music information at a given frequency.

11. A music distribution method comprising:  
requesting a server to distribute music information from a music reproduction apparatus through a communication medium;

generating by said server a distribution file in which said music information requested, advertisement

information and information concerning settings and conditions required for transmitting information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server are integrated;

5           distributing by said server said distribution file to said music reproduction apparatus through said communication medium; and

          receiving by said server through said communication medium a number of times of reproduction  
10       of said music information and a number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information reproduced by said music reproduction apparatus.

12. The music distribution method according to claim 11, further comprising:

15           requesting by said server to said music reproduction apparatus through said communication medium payment of a music-listening fee in accordance with said number of times of reproduction of said music information; and

20           requesting by said server to an advertiser through said communication medium payment of an advertisement fee in accordance with a number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information.

25           13. The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said communication medium is the Internet.

14. The music distribution method according to

claim 13, wherein said information concerning settings and conditions includes an Internet IP address required for reporting said number of times of reproduction of said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server.

15. The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said server receives said number of times of reproduction of said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information at a given frequency.

16. The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said distribution file has a header information portion and a main body information portion arranged under said header information portion, and a structure in which said information concerning settings and conditions and said advertisement information are recorded in said header information portion and said music information is recorded in said main body information portion.

17. The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said distribution file has a header information portion and a main body information portion arranged under said header information portion, and a structure in which said music information is recorded in said main body information portion and said information concerning settings and conditions and said

advertisement information are included in said music information.

18. The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said music information and said advertisement information have relevancy, and said music information and said advertisement information are selected in such a manner that the population of listener who prefer songs according to said music information matches with the population of audiences to which advertisement and general publicity according to said advertisement information should be carried out.

19. The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said music information and said advertisement information do not have relevancy, and said advertisement information is selected in such a manner that a given advertisement is reproduced with a predetermined timing and at a predetermined time in favor.

20. The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said advertisement information has a plurality of sets of information corresponding to respective output modes in such a manner that said music reproduction apparatus can select at least any one of a banner advertisement, a character output and an audio output in accordance with an output mode thereof.

21. A music distribution method comprising:

requesting by a music reproduction apparatus to  
a server distribution of music information through  
a communication medium;

5 receiving by said music reproduction apparatus  
from said server through said communication medium  
a distribution file in which said music information  
requested, advertisement information and information  
concerning settings and conditions required for  
transmitting information from said music reproduction  
10 apparatus to said server are integrated;

reproducing by said music reproduction apparatus  
said advertisement information with reproduction of  
said music information;

15 recording by said music reproduction apparatus  
a number of times of reproduction of said music  
information reproduced and a number of times of  
reproduction of said advertisement information; and

transmitting by said music reproduction apparatus  
to said server through said communication medium  
20 said number of times of reproduction of said music  
information and said number of times of reproduction  
of said advertisement information.

22. The music distribution method according to  
claim 21, further comprising receiving by said music  
25 reproduction apparatus a music-listening fee payment  
request according to said number of times of reproduc-  
tion of said music information which is transmitted

from said server through said communication medium.

23. The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said communication medium is the Internet.

5           24. The music distribution method according to claim 23, wherein said information concerning settings and conditions includes an Internet IP address required for transmitting said number of times of reproduction of said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information from  
10           said music reproduction apparatus to said server.

          25. The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said music reproduction apparatus transmits said number of times of reproduction of  
15           said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information at a given frequency.

          26. The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said music reproduction apparatus has  
20           a transmission/reception device and a portable reproduction device, said transmission/reception device receiving said distribution file from said server and transmitting said distribution file to said portable reproduction device, said portable reproduction device  
25           reproducing said music information and said advertisement information in said distribution file and transmitting said number of times of reproduction of



said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information to said transmission/reception device, said transmission/reception device transmitting said number of times of reproduction of said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information received to said server.

27. The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said music reproduction apparatus has a transmission/reception device and a portable reproduction device, said transmission/reception device receiving said distribution file from said server and transmitting said distribution file to said portable reproduction device, said portable reproduction device keeping said distribution file therein for a given period of time and then transmitting it to said transmission/reception device, said transmission/reception device calculating estimated values for numbers of times of reproduction of said music information and said advertisement information based on a keeping period in said portable reproduction device when said distribution file is returned from said portable reproduction device and transmitting the obtained values to said server.

28. The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said distribution file has a header information portion and a main body information portion

arranged under said header information portion, and  
a structure in which said information concerning  
settings and conditions and said advertisement  
information are recorded in said header information  
5 portion and said music information is recorded in said  
main body information portion.

29. The music distribution method according to  
claim 28, wherein said music information recorded in  
said main body information portion includes specific  
10 information which can specify said advertisement  
information, and said music reproduction apparatus is  
allowed to reproduce said music information when said  
advertisement information in said header information  
portion coincides with said specific information  
15 included in said music information in said main body  
information portion.

30. The music distribution method according to  
claim 21, wherein said distribution file has a header  
information portion and a main body information portion  
20 arranged under said header information portion, and has  
a structure in which said music information is recorded  
in said main body information portion and information  
concerning settings and conditions and said  
advertisement information are included in said music  
25 information.

31. The music distribution method according to  
claim 21, wherein said music information and said

advertisement information have relevancy, and said music information and said advertisement information are selected in such a manner that the population of listeners who prefer songs according to said music information matches with the population of audiences to which advertisement and general publicity should be carried out according to said advertisement information.

32. The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said music information and said advertisement information have no relevancy, and said advertisement information is selected in such a manner that a given advertisement is reproduced with a predetermined timing and at a given time in favor.

33. The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said advertisement information has a plurality of sets of information corresponding to each output mode in such a manner that said music reproduction apparatus can select at least any one of a banner advertisement, a character output and an audio output in accordance with its output mode.

34. The music distribution method according to claim 26, wherein said advertisement information has a plurality of sets of information corresponding to each output mode in such a manner that said portable reproduction device can select at least any one of a banner advertisement, a character output and an audio

output in accordance with its output mode.

35. The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said advertisement information is reproduced during reproduction of said music information.

36. The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said advertisement information is reproduced before or after reproduction of said music information.

37. A music distribution method comprising:

requesting by a music reproduction apparatus to a server distribution of music information through a communication medium;

receiving by said music reproduction apparatus said music information requested from said server through said communication medium;

receiving by said music reproduction apparatus information concerning settings and conditions and a plurality of sets of advertisement information from said server through said communication medium;

selecting by said music reproduction apparatus any advertisement information to be reproduced from a plurality of sets of said advertisement information when reproducing said music information;

reproducing by said music reproduction apparatus said selected advertisement information with reproduction of said music information;

recording by said music reproduction apparatus  
a number of times of reproduction of said music  
information reproduced and a number of times of  
reproduction of said advertisement information; and

5 transmitting by said music reproduction apparatus  
said number of times of reproduction of said music  
information and said number of times of reproduction of  
said advertisement information to said server through  
said communication medium.

10 38. The music distribution method according to  
claim 37, further comprising receiving by said music  
reproduction apparatus a music-listening fee payment  
request according to said number of times of  
reproduction of said music information, which is  
15 transmitted from said server through said communication  
medium.

39. The music distribution method according to  
claim 37, wherein said communication medium is the  
Internet.

20 40. The music distribution method according to  
claim 39, wherein said information concerning settings  
and conditions includes an Internet IP address required  
when said music reproduction apparatus reports said  
number of times of reproduction of said music  
25 information and said number of times of reproduction of  
said advertisement information to said server.

41. The music distribution method according to

claim 37, wherein said music reproduction apparatus transmits said number of times of reproduction of said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information at a given frequency.

42. The music distribution method according to claim 37, wherein said advertisement information has a plurality of sets of information corresponding to each output mode in such a manner that said music reproduction apparatus can select at least any one of a banner advertisement, a character output and an audio output in accordance with its output mode.

43. The music distribution method according to claim 37, wherein said advertisement information is reproduced during reproduction of said music information.

44. The music distribution method according to claim 37, wherein said advertisement information is reproduced before or after reproduction of said music information.

45. A music reproduction apparatus which reproduces music information distributed from a server, comprising:

means for requesting said server through a communication medium to distribute said music information;

means for receiving from said server through said

communication medium a distribution file in which said music information requested to be distributed and information concerning settings and conditions required for transmitting information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server are integrated;

means for reproducing said music information in said distribution file;

means for recording a number of times of reproduction of said music information reproduced; and

means for transmitting said number of times of reproduction of said music information to said server through said communication medium.

46. A server which distributes music information to a music reproduction apparatus, comprising:

means for receiving a request of distribution of said music information from said music reproduction apparatus through a communication medium;

means for generating a distribution file in which said music information requested to be distributed, advertisement information and information concerning settings and conditions required for transmitting information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server are integrated;

means for distributing said distribution file to said music reproduction apparatus through said communication medium; and

means for receiving through said communication

medium a number of times of reproduction of said music information and a number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information reproduced by said music reproduction apparatus.

1. The method of claim 1, wherein the first reproduction apparatus is a first reproduction apparatus and the second reproduction apparatus is a second reproduction apparatus.